

Indiana House of Representatives

News and Information

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STATEHOUSE REPORT FROM REP. TERRY GOODIN

INDIANAPOLIS – After two weeks of constant activity, House members were able to enjoy a brief break before picking up legislative work again.

For the next three weeks, representatives will be working on 150 bills and one joint resolution sent to the Indiana House by the state Senate. Our schedules will look the same as at the start of this year: most of our time in committees, followed by floor sessions that will grow increasingly longer as days go by.

There will be one difference this time. As we work through the Senate's bills, we also will be keeping an eye on the 122 House bills and one joint resolution that have been sent across the hall. That means two sets of committee meetings to attend, which makes things much more hectic. These are the days when you see many lawmakers running from one end of the Statehouse to the other, trying to keep track of all their bills.

It will be interesting to see how the Senate handles some of the initiatives we have sent their way, such as property tax relief and the governor's plan to sell the Indiana Toll Road to a foreign entity to finance his Major Moves program.

Leading senators already have made it clear they will radically change House Bill 1001, which provides \$150 million in property tax relief, but no way to pay for it. Speculation is that they will use this legislation as a vehicle to advance a plan that would enable local units of government to pass several types of local option taxes to provide property tax relief and fund government operations.

Since our focal point in the House will be on Senate bills, I wanted to use this week's Report to talk about some of the legislation that will be debated and voted on over the next few weeks.

As is the case every year, the Senate has sent us several bills that mirror legislation already debated in the House. Senate Bill 245, for example, is that chamber's version of the telecommunications deregulation proposal that generated so much attention when it came before the House. I'm sure this measure will draw the same discussions as before: will it lower prices and give more choices to consumers, or will it cause your bills to go up and reduce services?

Like House Bill 1155, which passed earlier this session, SB 6 will require people convicted of child molestation to be placed on lifetime parole when they are released from prison. Both bills also will require some of these people to wear electronic tracking devices as a condition of their parole. SB 246 will prohibit some molesters from living within 1,000 feet of a school, park or youth center or within a mile of the homes of their victims.

Representatives will get a chance to discuss the ongoing controversy that erupted last year when the Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) shut down a series of license branches across Indiana. SB 92 would create a legislative committee to review those closings, as well as any proposed shutdowns in the future, although the final decisions would be left with the BMV commissioner.

The House also will have the chance to renew debate on an issue that has cropped up several times in recent years. SB 88 would require all passengers in motor vehicles – including those in pickup trucks, recreational vehicles, tractors and in the back seats of automobiles – to wear safety belts.

SB 78 would give a property tax deduction to farmers who must spend money to securely store chemicals and

pesticides so they will not be stolen by terrorists or people who want to use the materials to make illegal drugs like meth.

In an effort to reduce the use of tobacco by workers, SB 117 would enable an employer to provide financial incentives through health insurance benefits.

SB 340 would protect the pensions of state workers who lose their jobs because of privatization or if the facility where they work is shut down.

And finally, SB 81 will require the state to set up rules for the operation of bungee jumping facilities.

If you would like to talk to me about any issue before the Indiana General Assembly, you can call me using the toll-free Statehouse telephone number of 1-800-382-9842, e-mail me through my Internet web site at www.IN.gov/H66 or write to me in care of the Indiana House of Representatives, 200 W. Washington St., Indianapolis, IN 46204.

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